

## **TOWN MEETING COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

### **Fiscal Year 2011**

The Town Meeting Coordinating Committee met 23 times during the year to carry out its responsibility of helping Town Meeting function well by informing Town Meeting Members and the public about Town Meeting and by providing information to allow members to make informed votes on articles. TMCC also worked to ensure that meeting procedures and the facilities for Town Meeting sessions serve it well.

In preparation for Special Fall Town Meeting and Spring Annual Town Meeting, TMCC events and activities included:

- Fall and Spring Warrant Reviews, cosponsored by the League of Women Voters.
- a Spring bus tour to visit sites related to warrant articles. There were not enough site-related articles to justify a tour prior to Fall Town Meeting.
- organizing precinct meetings.
- orientation for new Town Meeting Members.
- arranging for coverage and rebroadcasts of TMCC events on Amherst Media Channel 17.
- preparing information materials for packets mailed to Town Meeting Members.
- providing updated information on the Town Website and for subscribers to the TMCC listserv.

In addition TMCC:

- reviewed evaluation forms from all TMCC events.
- held meetings with the Town Manager, Town Clerk and Town Moderator to discuss issues related to Town Meeting.
- continued examining the possible use of electronic voting for Town Meeting. Additional information was gathered on estimated costs compared to current costs and the frequency and time spent for both standing and tallied votes over the previous 2 years (reviewed from TV coverage). It was found that although the price of equipment is less than it was a few years ago, the initial cost would be \$20,000-25,000 and the amortized annual cost for remote clickers and batteries might range from \$2,375 to \$7,250. The time study revealed that there had been only 26 standing or tallied votes in 18 sessions, averaging 90 minutes/year. In November a report was made available to Town Meeting Members at Town Meeting. In January, after reviewing of all the information, TMCC reached consensus not to pursue electronic voting for Town Meeting now, but continue to monitor the price of the technology and to leave the matter open for review in the future.
- sent postcards to Town Meeting Members with expiring terms.
- made phone calls to welcome new Town Meeting Members.
- continued pursuing questions of audio quality at Town Meeting. A subcommittee met with Brian Ecclestone, Kris Pacunas, Sandra Burgess, Jim Lescault and Aaron Hayden to discuss problems and solutions. To improve microphone use, Jim Lescault of Amherst Media produced a short film for Town Meeting on how and how not to use hand held microphones. There was a recommendation to purchase 8 new table

microphones and assistive hearing devices. The desirability of 2 additional mobile microphones for Town Meeting Member participation was considered. To reduce the problem of electronic interference, the Town Moderator at Town Meeting requested that people sitting near the front of the auditorium turn off cell phones and electronic devices. Communication continues among all those involved to explore on-going improvements for audio conditions during sessions and for rebroadcasts on Amherst Media.

- increased the number of subscribers to the TMCC email subscription list and the amount of information distributed.
- expanded and updated the TMCC web page on the town website and worked to make it easier for the public to use and access information on the Town Website.
- In order to encourage early public participation in budget formation, zoning and other town government issues, a subcommittee began compiling a master calendar of events and deadlines.

TMCC continues to respond to questions, suggestions and concerns regarding town meeting and looks for ways to effectively inform Town Meeting Members and the public about town meeting.

Seven Town Meeting Members serve on TMCC and are elected at Annual Town Meeting for 2 year terms, 3 in odd-numbered years and 4 in even-numbered years

#### TMCC Members

Margaret R. Roberts, Chair

Mary Streeter, Vice-Chair

Robert J. Crowner, Secretary (to May 25, 2011)

Patricia G. Holland, Secretary (from May 25, 2011)

Nonny Burack, Stacker

H. Oldham Brooks

Carol Jeannette Gray

Adrienne M. Terrizzi